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AUTHOR Coursey, Leon N.
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ABSTRACT

The contributions of black professional personnel to the field of physical education are enumerated and described. The careers of Anita J. Turner, Edwin B. Henderson, and Albert J. Overly in particular are examined. The ability of a minority group to provide significant leadership in an educational field is discussed, and the challenge still before black physical educators is presented. (LH)

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BLACK PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

and

UTILITARIANISM

Presented by:

Leon N. Coursey, Ph.D.

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BLACK PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

and

UTILITARIANISM

Speaking on the Romans' contributions to mankind, Van Dalen and Bennett wrote:

> The Romans did not develop new philosophical thought or evolve new scientific concepts. Nevertheless, the Western world is indebted to them for many practical contributions to mankind, and for grasping the dying torch of enlightenment from the Greeks and carrying its light into the darkened corners of the universe.
>
> The Latins adapted culture of the countries they conquered and applied the theoretical knowledge thus acquired.[1]

Hence, one can see that the Romans were utilitarian in their basic philosophical and pragmatic approaches to life. This is to say that they recognized the value of introducing new ideas and methodologies into their society. Therefore, through this utilitarianism, the Romans made outstanding contributions to civilization in engineering, administration, politics, and law to cite several.

Through this presentation, I shall endeavor to show that pioneering black physical educators were utilitarian in their approach to provide physical educational goods and services to

the segregated black populations of the United States of America, in general, and in Virginia and Washington, D.C., specifically. That is to say, black physical educators have contributed significantly to the historical development of our profession through the viable instrument of utilitarianism. Initially and until the Supreme Court decision of 1954, they worked primarily with and within the black communities.

In an attempt to minimize confusion, the remaining portion of this presentation shall consist of a discussion of Anita J. Turner, Edwin B. Henderson, and Albert J. Overby and their professional contributions to black people during the dark period in our American history when blacks were legally discriminated against as they pursued the American guaranteed realities of equal rights and equal justice under the law.

Continuing, Anita J. Turner graduated from Garnet Patterson Elementary School, M Street High School, and Minor Normal School #2. After graduating from Minor Normal School #2 in 1891, she was appointed a classroom teacher at the Lovejoy Elementary School in September of that same year. A review of her prestigious career in Washington, D.C. reveals the following:[2]

1. September, 1891 - appointed to first professional position as regular elementary classroom teacher.
2. January 1, 1893 - appointed to teach physical culture in the black elementary schools.

3. September 1, 1898 - assigned to teach physical education in black high schools.
4. September 1, 1902 - Promoted to Assistant Director of Physical Education in the black school system.
5. July 1, 1924 - Promoted to Director of Physical Education for both white and black schools.

Mr. Cato Adams*[9] (a life-long friend of Mr. Henderson who knew Miss Turner as a student and later as a colleague). He described her as a very strong-minded individual who was imbued with a determination to succeed. She was, also, a compassionate person who would gladly extend herself in order to assist someone in need. She was thoroughly dedicated to the task of providing optimum educational opportunities and conditions for the Washington, D. C. area black youngsters. She had a trigger hair temper who never yielded until she was conclusively shown to be in error. According to Mr. Adams, she was small, short but sturdily built woman with a very vivacious temperament. She never married and she possessed an instiable love for children.

She attended the famous Harvard Summer School during the summers of 1895, 1896, and 1897. The Harvard School was founded in 1887. The initial course had an enrollment of fifty-seven men and women and lasted for five weeks. Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent, with the backing of President Charles W. Eliot, founded the Summer School.

Ms. Turner was profoundly influenced by her rich experiences at Harvard Summer School. She utilized what she learned at Harvard to diversify her curricula planning efforts and to provide challenging, exciting, different and instructive opportunities for the black students (initially) and after 1925 for both blacks and white students in Washington, D.C.

Clarence B. Van Wyck recollects:[3]

> The Summer School was a common meeting ground of teachers and prospective teachers from many types of institutions, schools, and colleges, Y.M.C.A.'s, Turnvereins, athletic clubs, playgrounds, and social settlements . . .
>
> Both the Swedish and German systems formed important parts of this summer program and he (Dr. Sargent) secured the best exponents available for instruction in these systems. Always alert for new developments he welcomed any form of exercise that possessed elements of value . . . .
>
> The Summer School offered the broadest program of recreational play and games that could be found anywhere in America.

Ms. Turner was a dedicated professional educator with an insatiable appetite for learning and desire to teach others; consequently, she read constantly and became involved in as many professional opportunities that were possible. For example, I feel that I can say without fear of refutation that she was aware of Dr. Naismith's invention of basketball, President Eliot's

philosophy relative to "free electives" in higher education and of the "battle of the system controversy." The utilization of the knowledge she acquired as a direct or indirect consequence of her experiences provided her with a sound and stimulating foundation for her professional career. Her professional objective was to provide the optimum physical educational programs for the people of Washington, D.C.

In pursuit of this coveted objective, she:[4]

1. Replace the regimented formal exercises with games, stunts, and folk dance.
2. Instituted curricula opportunities which would aid in the development of students' attitude, interests, and skills with high carry-over value for later life.
3. Correlated physical activities with classroom work while developing units of play - in regards to these, she was ahead of her time.
4. She organized and conducted women's basketball play during the early 1900's just a few years after Dr. James Naismith invented it in 1891.
5. Organized and administered an all-high school athletic meet for girls.
6. Inaugurated an annual pre-school examination of children seeking admission to the black elementary school system.

7. She conducted a posture survey at Minor Normal School #2 and in the black elementary school; initiated and conducted a hearing survey involving approximately 8,000 youngsters in grades 3 - 6 of Washington, D.C.'s black elementary schools.

8. Encouraged black professionals to involve themselves in the profession at the local and national levels and to attend one of the many summer schools such as Harvard's Summer School.

In fact, she taught Mr. Edwin Bancroft Henderson at Normal School #2 and persuaded him to attend Dr. Sargent's Summer School.

Edwin B. Henderson was born in southeast Washington, D.C. on November 23, 1883, and died on February 3, 1977.

In September, 1904, after graduating number one from Normal School #2, he was appointed to teach at the black elementary school. Mr. Henderson enrolled and completed a session at Harvard's Summer School during the summers of 1904, 1905, and 1907. In 1904, after ranking first on the certification examination which he took after completing course work at the 1904 Harvard Summer School, he was appointed the first certificated black male physical training instructor in the nation's public school system.

Reflecting on his early professional experiences he states:[2]

> . . . I taught three days a week in the elementary schools teaching throughout the city, mainly in outlying districts to which I traveled on my bicycle. I returned to M Street and

> Armstrong in the afternoons, three days a week, that were not used for military training to coach the boys in athletics. I taught the rudiments of basketball to boys for the first time in Washington, D.C. Negro schools. In the next few years I taught and developed a number of teams, trained officials, and had much competition. During this period, I also taught the rudiments of fencing, boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, and track and field.

While these skills were being regularly taught at the white schools, it is obvious that he was a pioneer in bringing them to the black schools.

In 1930 and 1934, he earned his A.B. and M.A. degrees, respectively, from Howard University, Washington, D.C. and Columbia University, New York; he later completed more than fifteen credits towards a Ph.D. degree at Columbia.

A review of Mr. Henderson's fifty years as a working professional from 1904 until 1954 explicitly reveals that he was utilitarian in his official approach and determination to provide professional goods and services to the people of Washington, D.C.

Mr. Henderson was influenced by many people during his life. The first person who influenced him considerably was his mother who taught him to read at a very early age, 6 years old.

Professionally, his first influence was W.T.S. Jackson who was an Amherst graduate and a former track star. He later became a teacher and principal at the M Street School, presently called Dunbar, Washington, D.C. Mr. Jackson conducted the first interclass track meet at M Street School in the late 1890's. Mr. Henderson participated in this meet where twenty-four laps around the small school ground constituted a mile.

His next professional influence was Miss Anita J. Turner who taught Mr. Henderson at the Normal School #2 and persuaded him to attend Dr. D. A. Sargent's summer school at Harvard.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Henderson's next great professional influence occured at Harvard University. It was at Harvard that he came face to face with some of the giants of the physical education profession.

He commented:[6]

> I had planned to work that summer (1904) being depleted of funds. Miss Turner wrote Dr. Sargent asking him to get me a part-time job. I borrowed enough money for carfare, tuition and boarding and waited on Dr. Sargent's table in his boarding house for meals.
>
> The teachers in the Old Hemmenway Gymnasium were some of the noted pioneers in physical training such as Dr. Hartvig Nissen, Dr. Carl Schrader, Dr. James McCurdy, Dr. Dudley Sargent, and others.

> In my classes for three summers were men who have since become the foremost exponents of physical education in our nation. For example, Dr. Burnett, later Director of health and Physical Education in Baltimore, was a student instructor, Dr. Charles McCloy, and Leroy Samse, first man to pole vault twelve feet.

Hence, it was during his summers at Harvard that he acquired the knowledge and skills of many physical education activities that he employed in his physical educational curricula throughout his career. For example, he learned to play basketball at the 1904 Harvard Summer School and later in the same year he started basketball programs for boys in the Washington, D.C. black school system.

The early part of the twentieth century was an exciting and dynamic period for an intrinsically motivated professional such as Mr. Henderson. Unquestionably, it was a time which made an indelible impression on the young Mr. Henderson.

For instance, education between 1900 and 1930 underwent tremendous growth and change which affected the entire system. There was a strong drive for universal and free public education which continued unabated during this period. Consequently, the attendance, during this period, increased eleven (11) per cent in high schools. The primary reason for this growth was the influence of William Kilpatrick, William James, G. Stanley Hall, Charles Eliot,

Edward L. Thorndike and John Dewey. This influence was felt in a new understanding of child's nature. It was an aggressive enthusiasm for "interest versus effort" in the learning process, and the beginning of an appreciation of individual differences.

Being an avid reader, Mr. Henderson was quite familiar with the works of these men as a student and as a professional during his long and productive career; he was a student of Dr. Kilpatrick at Teachers College, Columbia University.

The events of Mr. Henderson's professional career conclusively attest to the fact that it personifies the spirit of this early "development" and later "acceptance and rapid growth" in the physical education profession. This growth was manifested by the new community concerns for health education, the efforts to bring about greater community use of schools, the enlargement of varsity athletic objectives, and the first insistent demands for intramural athletics.

In 1910 the concept of the "new physical education" was expounded by Thomas Wood and Clark Hetherington in "Health and Education" and "Fundamental Education," respectively.

Futhermore, Elmer D. Mitchell, Intramural Director at the University of Michigan, published the first book on intramural athletics in 1925.[1]

Mr. Henderson wrote and published a handbook concerning interscholastic athletics during the 1910, 1911, 1912, and 1913 school years. This handbook, Official Handbook, Interscholastic

Atlantic Association of Middle Atlantic States, contained many articles pertaining to intramural activities which were "ghost written" by Mr. Henderson.[2]

This is not to state that Mr. Henderson originated the concept of intramural athletics because, in 1909, students at Princeton organized an intercollegiate athletic association and sponsored intramural contests in basketball and baseball. Moreover Harvard's students organized dormitories into competitive units and conducted contests in rowing, football, basketball, and track and field. Furthermore, the University of Michigan and Ohio State University officially organized a department of intramural athletics with the assistance of their intercollegiate department.[1] Mr. Henderson had an insatiable love for reading and the acquisition of new knowledge; therefore, it is not surprising to know that he was aware of these occurences and that they helped to influence the organization of his intramural programs in the black schools of Washington, D.C.

Also, in 1927 Thomas Wood and Rosalind Cassidy wrote the notable book, The New Physical Education which was a major professional achievement and impacted greatly on Mr. Henderson's professional philosophy.

Hence, at the end of this period, health, physical education and recreation had achieved considerable stature and had become accepted components of the American way of life, and a large part of this acceptance in Washington, D.C. is directly attributable to the invaluable work of Mr. Henderson.

In the early 1930's the former social concept of individualism was replaced by a more humanitarian concept of equal opportunity

and "abundant living" for all which was advocated by President Roosevelt and the Democratic party. Three billion dollars were allocated by the Public Works Administration to provide for public facilities. One-sixth of this allocation was primarily for the building of school facilities.[2]

Nevertheless, as a result of the depression, the public schools were in a dire financial state and from 1932 through 1934 they began to feel the pinch of reduced budgets. For example, during this period, budgets and physical education personnel were reduced in "seven per cent of the public schools" along with other so-called "frill" subjects.

During the period from 1930 through 1940, there was great emphasis accorded the concept of individualized training in physical education. The proponents of this concept sought to reevaluate the objectives of physical education in terms of individual and social results rather than the number of skills learned.

Also, in the same period, there was some progress being made by the black school system of Washington, D.C. under Mr. Henderson's leadership. He reported in 1935, in an article entitled "Progress and Problems in Health and Physical Education Among Colored Americans," that:[2]

> . . . There are thirty colored physical education teachers in the public schools with salaries ranging from 1,800 to 3,700 annually. All but four have college degrees. Seven have A.M. degrees, and some are pursuing work toward the doctorate.

This report reveals his early concern for quality among his teaching personnel.

Mr. Henderson earned his Master's degree at Columbia University in 1934. It was at Columbia that he was directly exposed to Dewey's philosophy of developmentalism whereby the emphasis shifts from a curriculum-centered to a student-centered approach.

In addition, there was a loud cry during the second World War which asserted that the young American soldier was physically unfit to serve in the military. This outcry had a major impact upon Mr. Henderson's philosophical designs in his planning of the physical educational curricula for Washington, D.C. black students. He was appointed a member of the 1943 Committee of Physical Fitness which was a part of the Office of the Administrator, Federal Security Agency. This Committee was established by President Roosevelt with John B. Kelly as Chairman.

Besides having the distinguished distinction of being an active professional for 50 years - an honor that he shares with Johann Friedrich Guts Muth and Edward Hitchcock - Mr. Henderson was also a prolific professional and social commentator and activist. He utilized the philosophies and methologies espoused and employed in the white schools to provide effective health and physical education opportunities for the black youngsters of Washington, D.C. He was the recipient of many honors for his many professional and civic accomplishments. Among these honors is the "Fellow" in the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation for 1954.

I shall conclude my remarks on Mr. Henderson with the presenta-

tion of a statement by Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University on March 2, 1974, when he presented Mr. Henderson the highly conveted Alumnus Achievement Award:[7]

EDWIN BANCROFT HENDERSON

Fifty years ago you were appointed teacher of physical education in the M Street High School of the District of Columbia. This was the first appointment of a Negro man in the history of the United States, to the teaching of this subject.

You have organized and steadily revised a vigorous and progressive program of instruction and activities in health and physical education for Negro youth in all the public schools of the District of Columbia; you have pioneered in the organization and promotion of games and sports, in interscholastic competition and associations; and trustworthy officials in all the athletic sports. You have been a writer of articles and books on the Negro in sports, giving national and world-wide currency to the progress of Negro youth in these fields; and for more than a quarter of a century you have been a persistent and able worker to remove the blight os segregation and discrimination from the field of sports, and from every area of the public life.

In addition to your vigorous activity, the thousands of letters which you have written to the daily and weekly press in pursuit of your cause have constituted one of the most remarkable examples of the sustained effort of a private citizen to persuade public opinion toward constructive change, anywhere to be found in the United States.

When the work of removing segregation from the District of Columbia is finished, and when the participation of Negroes in collegiate and national professional sports, now so inspiringly widespread in the North and West, extends, as it will, all over the South, men everywhere will remember you as among the first, the ablest and the noblest life, and that you worked for this with remarkable energy and with unflagging goodwill characteristic of American citizenship at its best.

Edwin Bancroft Henderson - - your Alma Mater is proud of you.

Mr. Albert (Jim) Overby was born in Richmond, Virginia on November 29, 1906.

Speaking about his birthplace, Mr. Overby comments:[8]

> It is odd that I remember the number of that railroad flat in which I lived with my mother and grandfather. The number of the house was 1528 East Broad Street. This, by way, is about four blocks from the Governor's Mansion but it was a slum.

> One of the things I remember so well as a little boy was making friends with an iceman who had a horse and wagon. One day I made the mistake of riding out of the slums in which I lived into another part of Richmond where black people lived in houses with shrubbery, grass, flowers, trees and no outhouses outside. In the place where I lived it was necessary to go all the way around the back of the building to get to the toilet which was just an outhouse, used by, I would estimate, about 20 to 30 people or inhabitants of a whole row of very poor apartment houses.

He started elementary school in Richmond at Buckhanan Elementary School and completed elementary school in Clarkesville, Virginia. When he was partially through the seventh grade, his father decided that he would attend the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg which is presently Virginia State College. In 1923 and 1928 he started and completed his courses of study at the Normal and Industrial Institute respectively. He began his B.S. degree in 1928 and completed all of its requirements for graduation in 1935 at Virginia State College. He majored in physical education and biology. It took him seven years to complete his B.S. degree because financial problems forced him to leave school for a three year period from 1929 until 1932. During this period, he secured a job in Newark, New Jersey at the Newark Museum.

After graduating with a B.S. degree, he was employed by Virginia State College as custodian of the gymnasium, director of intramurals, equipment manager and instructor in physical education.

He was employed at the college from 1935 until 1943 when he was inducted into the Army, where he served until 1945.

Mr. Overby was married on August 20, 1931 and on October 19, 1940 he and Mrs. Gladys Overby were proud parents of Albert W. Overby, Jr. Commenting Mr. Overby stated:[8]

> I would like for you to know that I have been been married to one Gladys Overby for forty-six years. I must say that here is a woman that stuck with a man through, as the old people say, thick and thin. I also would like for you to know about this yardbird of a son that I have; he was a fairly good student. He graduated from Booker T. with honors; attended Brown University with honors without having to attend a Prep-School, graduated from New York University's Law School in June, 1965 and seventeen days later passed the New York State Board examination. Also, he is an accomplished pilot and a practicing lawyer in his own law firm in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Overby was an outstanding baseball and football player; in fact, he played professional baseball for one year as a member of the Petersburg Giants former professional negro baseball league.

In 1946 he resigned from his position at Virginai State College and begun his illustrious teaching and coaching career at Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk, Virginia. Recollecting, he stated:[8]

> I was the Head of the Department at Booker T. and we had a pretty good size department for 1946, that's when I began. There were six of us and I found somethings when I arrived there that did not please me too much. Some of the people did not major in physical education. As I can remember, one person was a math major and as a physical education teacher he could not give calisthenics. I got together with the supervisor of Health and Physical Education and of course he saw what I was talking about. Immediately, we begin to get our department filled with people who were qualified to teach Health and Physical Education. I would like to think that this is one worthwhile contribution I have made.

One needs only to talk with Mr. Overby to ascertain his keeness of mind and his ability to communicate his sentiments. He is an extremely profound person who appreciates and respects honesty and humanism but who irascibility is easily provoked when it is ridiculed by superficiality, dishonesty or inhumanity. He is a voracious reader of professional literature and current news because of an intrinsic motivation to be informed. Since this is his basic character, he was aware of the professional achievements by the earlier pioneers in our profession and he utilized that which he was able to provide his students with more stimulating, diversified, challenging and educational

experiences in physical education. He was knowledgeable of the push in the late 40's to improve teacher education and the graduate education and the resulting two conferences in 1948 and 1950 respectively. Consequently, when speaking to his supervisor about the professional qualification of his staff, he was able to substantiate his professional opinion with current professional convictions or standards.

His football coaching career which spanned eighteen years is remarkable:[8]

	Won	Lost	Tied
1947	5	2	2
1948	9	1	0
1949	6	3	0
1950	8	2	0
1951	7	2	0
1952	6	1	1*
1953	6	0	2
1954	6	3	1
1955	7	3	0
1956	10	0	0*
1957	7	3	0
1958	8	0	1*
1959	8	1	1
1960	7	3	0
1961	1	7	1
1962	7	3	0
1963	7	1	1

	Won	Lost	Tied
1964	7	7	0
	117	42	10

*Virginia Interscholastic Athletic League - Championship Teams (all black schools)

While there is no question as to his outstanding career at Booker T., Mr. Overby was also a pioneer in the establishing and administering of black athletic officiating organizations. He utilized the principles and procedures of established black and white organizations to provide a healthy, safe and competitive athletic environment for the black communities in Virginia and parts of Washington, D.C.; it was also a good means by which he and other competent black professionals could supplement their annual salary.

Thus, he was directly involved in the founding of the subsequently listed Boards of Officials:[8]

1. 1935 - Central Board of Officials (C.B.O.)
   The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association united with the C.B.O. in approximately 1948 and became the Affiliated Board of Officials.
2. 1946 - Hampton Roads Board of Officials

I believe that it is significant to point out the fact that Mr. Overby is a genuinely sincere and humane person who is committed to the task of helping others to achieve and experience happiness and longevity of life. He is a profound person with a strong sense of dedication, determination and conviction.

Moreover, he is a no nonsense person of few words who confronts the reality of situations. The following two inscriptions, which are found inscribed on plaques hanging on his study room walls, will help to convey the point that I desire to make here:[8]

I had no shoes
and complained
Until I met a man
who had no feet

Persian Proverb

Four Things Come
Not Back
.The Spoken Word
.The Spent Arrow
.The Past Life
.The Neglected Opportunity

Arabian Proverb

After understanding the type of a person that he is, it is no surprise to learn that in 1936 he was instrumental in the founding and administering - for many years out of his own pocket - the Trojan Club at Virginia State College. He relates:[8]

> Back in those days you had to pay your own way. If you did not it was just too bad. Often, a student or faculty member would be in need of emergency money because of illness in the immediate family or whatever. Therefore, the Trajan Club was organized. It operated out of

the pockets of the founders for the first couple of years. Because of the vital service that I was providing both students and faculty, its popularity grew to the point that it became so large that a new automobile was raffled away at its annual fund raising event and it is extant.

While speaking about his life's experiences and people who made a definitive impact on it, he stated many details which included the following:

I forgot to mention Harry Jefferson known in the sports' world as "Big Jeff." He coached football at Virginia State; however, my eligibility had expired in the CIAA and I was unable to play for his team. This is something you probably don't know but at one time you could play four years in the CIAA. During the twenties many of us were in high school and played two or three years in high school. Therefore, when we went to school, we did not have many years of eligibility left. As a result a great many promising football players never got a chance to really blossom. He was a fair man, a very competent football coach and truly a no-nonsense man. He was a fair man, but in using the language of the street, the athletes had to be on the ball.

I think that a bit of his philosophy rubbed off on to me; I tried very hard to do the same thing when I went to Booker T. He worked for a

good while at Virginia State and built some fine football teams and I think he turned out some fine men. Moreover, when I would call him up in the middle of the night and ask him, 'hey what do you do about so-and-so?' What do you do to tackle a wide tackle six or something like that.

We would run our telephone bills up into big money trying to help a little high school coach down in Norfolk, Virginia.

The other man I want to talk about is Dr. James A. Moore, he was the Head of the Physical Education Department at Virginia State, he's dead now. For some reason Jimmy Moore took a liking to Jim Overby and I could do no wrong in Jimmy Moore's sight.

I am deeply grateful to him and I have tried to do for the youngsters I have worked with - football players and non-football players - what these two outstanding men and many others have done for Jim Overby. I hope my efforts have in some way paid back these gentlemen for what they did for me.

Hence, I concur with Professor G. G. Singleton, (Professor Emeritus, Director of School of Commerce Virginia State College) who responded to my inquiries about Mr. Overby's life and professional career; he states:[9]

To know Albert (Jim) Overby, thus, is to

know a man who is held in the highest esteem for his outstanding contributions in the educational arena, for his passion for helping others, for his belief in the worth of the individual and finally, for the moral, ethical and spiritual principles he espoused and exemplified in his daily actions and living.

In conclusion, it is my desire to make the following points in this presentation:

1. Black physical educators made significant professional contributions to our profession.
2. These significant contributions were utilitarian in nature and kind.
3. These contributions were primarily made within the black communities and concomitantly impacted positively upon the total American society relative to the establishment of mutual trust and respect among all people of our society.

While it is true that these three blacks physical educators as well as a score of others have made significant contributions to our profession, the task before us is still great in our determined efforts to challenge contemporary and future black scholars to join our profession as we assure them equity and equality of all opportunities associated with our profession. I realize that this task is arduous and perhaps a considerable amount of time will pass before these opportunities are realities; nevertheless, I am of the conviction that the achievement of this task is possible. I thank you for your patience and indulgence.

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